

GOOD STUFF

Red had a job cleaning rooming houses and he often brought me the leftovers of the dead. "nobody wanted this stuff. look at this shirt. you can't buy a shirt like this anywhere today."

"thanks, Red."

"Here, try on this robe. look at that god damned thing. ever seen anything like it?"

"no, no, I haven't."

"he died Tuesday. try it on."

I got into it. it was like a bed quilt -- thick, and yellow and green. I tightened the belt.

"it's almost too big for you but it looks good. he was a big guy. I knew him. he worked as a janitor and drank malt beer."

"thanks, Red, I can use this."

"need any stockings? underwear?"

"no, I'm all right there ..."

Red left to go clean out more rooms

that big robe was something like the kings wore in the old days. I really liked it, I'd never seen anything like it in the stores. it must have passed down through the generations.

my new girlfriend came over one night and we sat around drinking. I was still in the stage where I was trying to impress her. so after drinking a couple of hours I told her, "I'll be right back."

I went into the bedroom and put it on and then walked out with my drink in my hand.

"Jesus Christ, what's that?"

"this, my dear, is class!"

"it's too big and it's filthy! where did you get it?"

"some guy died and they were going to throw it away."

I sat down next to her.

"it stinks!"

"there's nothing wrong with death," I told her, "there is nothing shameful about death."

I decided not to show her the shirt. I also had a good pair of reading glasses.

we didn't make love that night

the next time Red came by he had a pair of leather gloves.

"this guy died last Friday. he worked in a paper box factory. his relatives came by and cleaned the place out. but they forgot these. I found them on the closet floor."

I put them on. they were a little small but they were almost new, just a tiny hole in one of the fingers, left hand.

"thanks, Red, they're beautiful."

"you can't get gloves like that anywhere."

"hey," I told him, "don't I know it?"